FRATERNITY AND COOPERATION IN ISLAM

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In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs *to Allah, the Lord of all being;*
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of
your, messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۞ اَلرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۞ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۞ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۞ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ
سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ
وَصَلِّ عَلَىٰ جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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Publication Secretary,

World Organization for Islamic Services.
(WOFIS).

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TRANSLITERATION

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	'	ف	f
ب	b	ق	q
ت	t	ك	k
ث	th	ل	l
ج	j	م	m
ح	ḥ	ن	n
خ	kh	و	w
د	d	ه	h
ذ	dh	ي	y
ر	r	ة	ah
ز	z	*Long Vowels*	
س	s	ا	ā
ش	sh	و	ū
ص	ṣ	ي	ī
ض	ḍ	*Short Vowels*	
ط	ṭ	َ	a
ظ	ẓ	ُ	u
ع	'	ِ	i
غ	gh		

FRATERNITY IN ISLAM

One of the strongest links joining people together is the relationship of brotherhood. People love and sympathize with each other and share in the delights and miseries of their fellow brethren.

There is the possibility of occasional differences between them, but soon it is changed into love and affection through forgiveness.

As Islam aims at solidarity of society and strengthening human relations, it has fostered this relationship and has declared that all Muslims and believers are brothers to each other.

Islam regards the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s. a.w. a.w.) * as the father and all Muslims as his children; therefore the Muslims are brothers to each other.

This feeling of brotherhood of Islam knows no boundary whatsoever, and all Muslims irrespective of their colour, place of birth and language, are equal and brothers to each other.

* (s.a.w.a.w.) is the abbreviation of Arabic phrase sal 'Allahu `alayhi wa aalihi wa sallam (may Allah's pcace and benediction be upon him and his progeny).

The Qur'an dictates

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ (الحجرات : ١٠)

The believers are but brothers to each other, so make reconciliation between your two brothers, and fear Allah that you may receive mercy. (49:10)

As is evident from History, the pre-Islamic period was full of hatred, enmity and strife amongst people. Islam, through its teachings, infused a new life of fraternity in humanity, thus giving rise to Islamic brotherhood.

The Qur'an again emphasizes this point

﴿وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيعاً وَلاَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ
اللهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ اَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ
بِنِعْمَتِهِ اِخْوَاناً وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ
مِنْهَا ...﴾ (آل عمران : ١٠٣)

And hold fast all together by the rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah's bounty on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the pit of fire; and He saved you from it . . . (3:103).

Islam has laid down the mutual rights and obligations of Muslims towards each other and they are obliged to discharge the same.

al-Imam Zaynu '1-'Abidin (a. s.) * has written in his *Risalatu '1-huquq*

وَاَمَّا حَقُّ أَهْلِ مِلَّتِكَ عَامَّةً: فَاِضْمَارُ السَّلامَةِ وَ نَشْرُ جَنَاحِ
الرَّحْمَةِ، وَالرِّفْقُ بِمُسِيئِهِمْ، وَ تَأَلُّفُهُمْ، وَاسْتِصْلاحُهُمْ، وَ
شُكْرُ مُحْسِنِهِمْ اِلَى نَفْسِهِ اِحْسانَهُ اِلَيْكَ، اِذَا كَفَّ عَنْكَ أذاهُ،
وَ كَفاكَ مَؤُونَتَهُ، وَ حَبَسَ عَنْكَ نَفْسَهُ. فَعُمَّهُمْ جَمِيعاً
بِدَعْوَتِكَ، وَانْصُرْهُمْ جَمِيعاً بِنُصْرَتِكَ، وَاَنْزِلْهُمْ جَمِيعاً مِنْكَ

* (a.s.) is the abbreviation of Arabic phrase *`alay-hi / ha / himu 's-salam* (may peace be upon him/her/them).

مَنَازِلُهُمْ. كَبِيرَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْوالِدِ، وَ صَغِيرَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْوَلَدِ،
وَأَوْسَطَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الأَخِ، فَمَنْ أَتَاكَ تَعَاهَدْتَهُ بِلُطْفٍ وَرَحْمَةٍ،
وَصِلْ أَخَاكَ بِمَا يَجِبُ لِلأَخِ عَلَى أَخِيهِ.

(تحف العقول : ١٩٥، [بيروت]: مؤسسة الأعلمي،
١٣٨٣ هـ /١٩٦٩م)

And it is the duty of your fellow co-religionists in gereral to have peaceful feelings amongst them, and to spread the wings of mercy upon them; to be gentle towards ***the*** *wrong doers among them and to reform them (by earning their love); to be grateful to those who are virtuous in their character or are generous towards you; because*

their righteousness of character (without any apparent of benefits to you) *is in itself a generosity towards you, as they have thus saved you from their misbehaviour and spared you the effort of protecting yourself from them, and kept their troubles away from you.*

Therefore, pray, while you pray, for all of them and treat all Muslims according to their proper position. Keep the elders in the position of your father, the youngers in the place of your child, the contemporaries in the position of your brother.

Thus, treat any of them who comes to you with grace and love; and convey to your (Muslim) brother whatever is incumbent on a brother from a brother. (Tuhafu '1-`uqul, p.195)

The sixth Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said

اَلْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، هُوَ عَيْنُهُ وَ مِرْآتُهُ وَ دَلِيلُهُ، لايَخُونُهُ وَلايَخْدَعُهُ ، وَلايَظْلِمُهُ، وَلايُكَذِّبُهُ، وَلايَغْتَابُهُ.

(الكافى : ١۶۶/٢، [طهران]: طبعة دارالكتب الإسلاميّة)

A Muslim is brother of another Muslim, and he is his eyes (to look through good and evil) and his mirror (to point out his merits and demerits) and his guide. Never does he betray him nor does any injustice to him nor deceives him nor tells him any lie nor backbites him. (*al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p.166)

The Holy Prophet said about the mutual rights of Muslims towards each other

...يَغْفِرَ زَلَّتَهُ، وَيَرْحَمَ عَبْرَتَهُ ، وَيَسْتُرَ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَيُقِيلَ عَثْرَتَهُ، وَ يَقْبَلَ مَعْذِرَتَهُ، وَ يَرُدُّ غَيْبَتَهُ، وَيُدِيمُ نَصِيحَتَهُ، وَيَحْفَظُ خُلَّتَهُ ... وَيَعُودُ مَرْضَتَهُ ... وَيُجِيبُ دَعْوَتَهُ، وَ يَقْبَلُ هَدِيَّتَهُ ، وَيُكَافِيءُ صِلَتَهُ، وَيَشْكُرُ نِعْمَتَهُ، وَيُطِيبُ كَلامَهُ، ... وَيُوالِي وَلِيَّهُ وَلايُعادِيهِ، ... وَلاَيُسْلِمُهُ، وَلاَيَخْذُلُهُ، وَيُحِبُّ لَهُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ ماَ يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ، وَيَكْرَهُ لَهُ مِنَ الشَّرِّ ماَ يَكْرَهُ لِنَفْسِهِ.

(بحارالأنوار، كتاب العشرة، ۷۴/ ۲۳۶ [طهران]: الطبعة الحديثة)

. . . (A Muslim) must forgive the mistakes (of his fellow Muslim) and should symphathize (with him) in his distress; should cover his defects and pardon his slips; should accept his apology, protect him in his absence (against his backbiters) and continue giving him good advices; should preserve his friendship ... visit him in sickness ... accept his invitation and gift, and equally compensate his favour; should have regard for his affection; talk to him gently ... and love his friends and should not be jealous of them ... should not leave him in the thick of miseries and (lastly) should like for him whatever good he likes for himself, and should hate for him whatever evil he hates for himself. (*Biharu '1-anwar, Kitabu '1-`ishrah,* vol. 74, p. 236)

The sixth Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

أَحِبَّ لأَخيكَ الْمُسْلِمَ مَا تُحِبُّ لِـنَفْسُكَ وَ إِذا إحْـتَجْتَ
فَسَلْهُ. وَ إِنْ سَألَكَ فَأعْطِهِ. لاَتَمُلَّهُ خَيْراً وَلاَيَمُلَّهُ لَكَ . كُنْ
لَهُ ظَهْراً فَإِنَّهُ لَكَ ظَهْرٌ. إذاَ غَابَ فَأحْفَظْهُ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ وَإِذاَ
شَهِدَ فَزُرْهُ، وَأَجِلَّهُ. وَأكْرِمْهُ. فَإِنَّهُ مُنْكَ وَ أَنْتَ مِنْهُ. فَأِنْ
كاَنَ عَلَيْكَ عَاتِباً فَلاَتُفاَرِقْهُ حَتَّى تَسْأَلَ سَمِيحَتَهُ، وَ إِنْ
إبْتُلِيَ فَاغْضُدْهُ . وَإِنْ تُمُحِّلَ لَهُ فَأَعِنْهُ.

(الكافى : ٢/١٧٠، [طهران]: طبعة دار الكتب الإسلاميّة)

Like for your Muslim brother what you like for yourself. In the event of need, ask from him, and if he asks for something give it to him. Do not be reluctant in doing a good to him and he should not be reluctant in doing a good to you. Be his support because he is your support. Protect him in his absence and visit him when he is present. Respect him and have regard for him since he is from you and you are from him. If he becomes angry do not break off your relation with him, but accept his excuse instead. If good befalls him, thank Allah (on his behalf) , and if he is in trouble, rush to his help. If his enemies deceive or try to trap him, help him and protect him from victimization. (al-Kafi, vo1.3, p.170)

The above examples show how Islam has emphasized the fraternal rights of Muslims.

Apart from these general rules, Islam has laid down detailed rules which deal with the duties of Muslims towards each other in all walks of life and which have been much emphasized by the leaders of Islam.

* * * * *

COOPERATION (MUWASAAT) IN ISLAM

"*muwasaat*" means helping brethren in Islam and extending material support to them. It has a great importance in religion due to the reason that it plays a vital role in the betterment of depressed classes and creates feeling of love amongst Muslims. It is considered as an essential virtue of every Muslim and brings divine blessings in return.

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) said:

تَقَرَّبُوا اِلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى بِمُوَاسَاةِ اِخْوَانِكُمْ.

(الخصال : ١/ ٨، [طهران]: طبعة مكتبة الصدوق)

Seek nearness to Almighty Allah through helping your (Muslim) brothers. (al-Khisal, by ash-Shaykh as-Saduq, vol. I, p.8).

The Holy Prophet in one of his testaments to `Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said

سَيِّدُ الاَعْمَالِ ثَلاَثُ خِصَالٍ: اِنْصَافُكَ النَّاسَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، وَ مُوَاسَاةُ الاَخِ فِي اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ . وَ اذْكُرُ اللهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ.

(الخصال: ١/ ١٢٥، [طهران]: طبعة مكتبةالصدوق)

The most commendable are three deeds:-

First is being just to the people even against yourself. Secondly, cooperation and material help to (Muslim) *brothers. Thirdly, rememberance of Allah in all circumstances.* (*al-Khisal,* vol. 1, p.125)

al-Imam `Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said

مُوَاسَاةُ الأَخِ فِى اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ تَزِيدُ فِى الرِّزْقِ.

(الخصال: ٢/ ٥٠٥، [طهران]: طبعة مكتبة الصدوق)

Helping the brothers-in-Allah (fellow Muslims) *increases sustenance. (al-Khisal,* vol. 2, p.505)

al-Waqidi, the famous historian of al-Mamun's period, narrates

"I had two very close friends, one of whom was a Hashimite. Truly speaking, we were one spirit in three bodies. Once, on the occasion of `id (Islamic festival), I was reduced to poverty. My wife told me that we could face together all the hardships boldly, but her heart was burning for the children. They were looking at other children wearing new dresses and making jubilant preparation for `id; whereas their lot was worn and torn clothes. She asked me, if possible, to arrange some money for buying dresses for them.

"I thought and thought but could not find any way of obtaining money. At last, I wrote a letter to my Hashimite friend for help. My friend sent me a sealed packet containing one

thousand Dirhams. Before I could open the packet, a message came from my second friend with a request of help, I sent him the same packet intact and went to the mosque, heart-broken and depressed, I passed the whole night in the mosque as I could not bring myself to face my wife. But when I went home next morning, to my great surprise, my wife welcomed me with a smiling face and expressed her unbounded pleasure for the help I had rendered to my friend.

"It was then that my Hashimite friend came to me and asked me what I had done with the money he had sent me the day before. I narrated to him the whole story. He bent his head for a moment, then told me that on receipt of my message, he had sent me whatever he had, but then to meet his own requirements he wrote to the third friend for help.

The third friend sent him the same sealed packet. My first friend was extremely puzzled by this mystery, till I solved it."

al-Waqidi further adds: "Then we divided that amount equally amongst us at the rate of three hundred Dirhams each, and the remaining one hundred Dirhams was the share of my wife.

"Caliph al-Ma'mun hearing this unique story called me, and I narrated the whole event. al-Ma'mun awarded us two thousand Dirhams each and one thousand to my wife." (*Muruju 'dh-dhahab* by Mas'udi, Beirut 1966, vol.3, p.446)

This historical event describes the feeling of a few Muslims who had learnt their lessons from the Qur'an. See how the spirit of cooper ation and fraternity had enlivened their lives as a result of Islamic teachings.

The early history of Islam is full of such events which clearly show the spirit of fraternity and brotherhood which governed the whole life of the Muslims.

In the battle of *Uhud,* which was one of the most hard-fought battles of Islam, the Muslims set high examples of self-sacrifice and many of them were martyred, fighting bravely.

Many of them fell in the battlefield half alive amongst them were seven stalwarts, fatally injured every breath seemed the last breath. All of them were feeling the pangs of thirst. Some-one came to them with a small quantity of water, hardly sufficent for a single soul.

The water-bearer offered drink to one of them but he directed him towards the next Muslim brother lying by his side. This second

soldier sent him to the third one who directed him to the fourth; and so it went on till he reached the seventh soldier. When the seventh soldier was approached, he told him that since the first soldier was very thirsty, he should be given water first.

The water-bearer then returned to the first soldier and found that he had died. Then he went to the second and third who also had expired. This happened with each of them, till approaching the last soldier he found that meanwhile he also had died. All of them died thirsty setting excellent practical example of Islamic brotherhood and self-sacrifice.

This is a lesson from the school of the Holy Prophet which was followed by his true followers in every walk of life even under the most difficult circumstances.

It is an irony of fate that we have abandoned such spiritual teachings and golden principles and drifting with the current of non-cooperation and selfishness which are undoubtedly the gift of un-Islamic societies. Let us keep in mind that this trend is a violation of Islamic idealogy, and Muslims should never turn deaf ears to the hardships and problems of their fellow-Muslims.

The Holy Prophet said:

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ لَا يَهْتَمُّ بِأُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْلِمٍ.

(الكافی: ٢/ ١۶٣ ، [طهران]: طبعة دارالکتب الإسلاميّة)

One who starts his day without caring (about) the affairs of the Muslims, is not a Muslim. (*al-Kafi,* vol. 2, p.163)

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sddiq (a.s.) said:

خِيَارُكُم سُمَحَاؤُكُمْ، وَشِرَارُكُمْ، بُخَلائُكُمْ، مِنْ صَالِحِ الأَعْمَالِ: اَلبِرُّ بِالإِخْوانِ، وَالسَّعيُ فِي حَوَائِجِهِمْ، وَفِي ذَلِكَ مَرْغَمَةٌ لِلشَّيْطانِ وَتَزَحُّحٌ عَنِ النِّيرانِ وَ دُخُولُ الجِنانِ.

(أمالي الشيخ الطوسي : ١/ ٦٦، طبعة النجف الأشرف)

The best amongst you are those who are generous and the worst are the misers; one of the most desired deeds is to do good to Muslim brethren and try to ful. fil their needs. This deed weakens Satan, safe-guards against the Fire (of Hell) *and leads one to Paradise. (Amali,* ash-Shaykh at-Tusi, vol. 1, p.66)

A man approached the Holy Prophet of Islam and complained of hunger. The Holy Prophet sent someone to the houses of his families but, unfortunately, none of the families had any food.

The Holy Prophet then turned to those who were in his presence and asked, "Who can host this man tonight?" al-Imam `Ali (a.s.) offered his services, took his hand and left for his house.

Then he asked his wife, Sayyidah Fatimah (a.s.), "What food do we have?" She replied, "A little provision enough for children only." `Ali (a.s.) told her, "The guest must be considered first before ourselves and the children."

Fatimah (a.s.) had to make a great effort to put her children to sleep since they were hungry. `Ali (a.s.) offered the guest whatever

he had, and, pretending to set the lamp right, put it out; he invited the guest to the food in the darkness of the room and himself sat there pretending he was also eating, though, in fact, he did not take a single morsel. 'Ali, Fatimah and their children fed the guest for the pleasure of Allah and remained hungry themselves.

Allah praises their sacrifice in these words:

﴿... وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ...﴾ (الحشر: ٩)

. . . *And they give* (others) *preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot* . . . (Qur'an, 59:9)

Of course, this type of self-denial is not possible for every one; and only a man like 'Ali (a.s.) could perform such deeds. Islam, there-

fore, does not compel its followers to do similar deeds. What actually Islam has made compulsory is brotherhood and cooperation, which means that a Muslim must help his Muslim brother if he is in hardship and trouble. A part of his resources should be reserved for the benefit of needy persons. He must visit sick persons and sympathize with them, should be like a father to orphans, and should participate in all works of general welfare, and should be helpful to those in distress.

A Greek remained with `Ali (a.s.) for a considerable period, making inquiries about Islam. Once he was convinced of the truth of Islam, he embraced Islam at the hands of `Ali (a.s.). Then, `Ali (a.s.) informed him about his duties as a Muslim. During that discourse, he said

وَ آمُرُكَ أَنْ تُوَاسِيَ إِخْوَانَكَ الْمُطَابِقِينَ لَكَ عَلَىٰ تَصْدِيقِ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ وَ تَصْدِيقِي، وَ الإِنْقِيَادِ لَهُ وَلِي، مِمَّا رَزَقَكَ اللهُ، وَ فَضَّلَكَ عَلَىٰ مَنْ فَضَّلَكَ بِهِ مِنْهُمْ، تَسُدُّ فَاقَتَهُمْ، وَ تَجْبُرُ كَسْرَهُمْ وَ خُلَّتَهُمْ. (الاحتجاج للطبرسي: ١/ ٣٥٤ الطبعة المحققة في النجف الاشرف ؛ بحارالأنوار، كتاب العشرة: ٧٤/ ٢٢١ [طهران]: الطبعة الحديثة).

I direct you to help your brethren who are the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) and mine, assist them from the wealth which Allah has given you, fulfil their needs, redress their troubles and behave with them, with friendship and love. (*al-Ihtijaj*, at-Tabarsi, vol.l, p. 354)

al-Imam `Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (a.s.) said:

إنَّ مِنْ حَقِّ المُؤْمِنِ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ: المَوَدَّةَ لَهُ في صَدْرِهِ، وَ الْمُوَاسَاةَ لَهُ فِي مَالِهِ، وَ النُّصْرَةَ عَلَى مَنْ ظَلَمَهُ ... وَ لاَ يَظْلِمُهُ، وَ لاَ يَغُشُّهُ، وَ لاَ يُكَذِّبُهُ ... مَنْ كَسَى مُؤْمِناً مِنْ عُرىً كَسَاهُ اللهُ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَ حَرِيرِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَ مَنْ أَقْرَضَ مُؤْمِناً قَرْضاً يُرِيدُ وَجْهَ اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ، حُسِبَ لَهُ ذٰلِكَ بِحِسَابِ الصَّدَقَةِ، وَ مَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيا فَرَّجَ اللهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الآخِرَةِ.

(بحار الانوار: ٢٣٢/٧٤-٢٢٣، [طهران]: الطبعة الحديثة)

It is the duty of a believer towards another believer to have his love in his heart, to assist him with his wealth, and to stand by his side against one who does injustice to him . . . He should never trouble, deceive, cheat, abandon or backbite him, nor tell a lie to him . . . One who presents a dress to his Muslim brother, Allah will reward him with a robe of paradise; and one who lends money to his Muslim brother for the pleasure of Allah, gets the reward of charity in return; and one who relieves his religious brother from pain and distress, Allah will relieve him of the pain of the next world. (*Biharu '1- anwar,* vol. 74, pp.232-233)

Safwan al-Jammal narrates:

"While I was sitting with al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) a Meccan arrived and told him

that he had no money to return to his home. The Imam directed me to help that person. After great efforts, I arranged the fare for him and returned to the Imam. The Imam asked, `What did you do about your brother?' 'By the grace of Allah his need was fulfilled,' I replied. The Imam said, 'Know that helping a Muslim brother is more liked by me than doing tawaf (circumambulation) of the House of Allah for seven times.' The Imam then added:

" 'A man approached al-Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) with the request of help. The Imam at once put on his shoes and went with him. They passed on the way a place where al-Imam al-Husayn (a. s.) was engaged in prayers. al-Imam al -Hasan asked the person, "Why did you not approach al-Husayn to alleviate your troubles?' He replied, 'O son of the Messenger of Allah, I wanted to go to him; but I was informed that he was

in *i'tikaf* (meditation), therefore, I did not go to him.' The Imam said, `Had he got the opportunity to help you it would have been far better for him than one month's *i'tikaf.' "* (*al-Kafi,* vol.2, p.198)

al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a. s.) said:

مَاقَضَى مُسْلِمٌ لِمُسْلِمٍ حَاجَةً إلاّ نَادَاهُ اللهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى : عَلَيَّ ثَوابُكَ، وَ لاأَرْضَى لَكَ بِدوُنِ الْجنَّةِ.

(قرب الأسناد : ١٩)

Whenever a Muslim fulfils the needs of a Muslim brother, Allah says, "Your reward is upon me, and I will not be happy with less than Paradise for you." (*Qurbu '1-isnad,* p. 19)

A Shi'ah of Kufah (Iraq) named 'Abdu '1-A'la left for Medina. The followers of al-Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) gave him their problems in writing and asked him to bring the replies from the Imam. Also they asked him to request the Imam to explain the rights which a Muslim has upon other Muslim brethren.

'Abdu'1-A'la says that when he reached the Imam, he replied to all the questions but did not say anything about the rights of Muslims upon each other. He went to the Imam several times, but still there was silence. At the end of his stay he went to take leave of the Imam and said that that particular question of that day was still unanswered.

The Imam said: "I deliberately avoided this issue." 'Abdu'l-A'la asked, "Why?" The Imam said, "Because I am afraid that if I tell you the

same and you do not follow it faithfully, you will go against the religion of Allah." Then, the Imam explained

"Verily, the most difficult of the things which Allah has obliged his servants to do, are three things: -

"First, doing justice between himself and others; it means that he should do to others as he wants done to himself.

"Second, he should help his Muslim brethren by assisting them with his wealth.

"Third, he should always remember Allah. And when I say `should remember Allah,' I do not mean that he should always recite *subhana 'llah* (Glory to Allah) and *al-hamdu li'llah* (Praise belongs to Allah). But I mean that if he intends

to do an unlawful deed, he must remember Allah and refrain from that sin." *(al-Kafi,* vol. 2, p.170*; Biharu '1-anwar,* vol. 74, p. 242).

These teachings had such an influence on the lives of the followers of Islam that their noble behaviour could not be compared with any other nation, as we have seen some examples in the preceding pages; history is full of stories of such brotherhood and cooperation.

Centuries have passed since the dawn of Islam and the world has achieved what is called technical and scientific development; but these human virtues are conspicuous by their absence in those so-called advanced countries.

One of the writers, writes about mutual relationship of the Europeans

"Relationship between the people is cold and devoid of deep-rooted affection. Sincere and heart-felt love, which is one of the noble emotions and brightens the life, appears to be lost in the machine-wheels of industries. They are not aware of sympathy, let alone self-sacrifice, and probably the friends of an individual may be counted on fingers.

"When I was admitted to a hospital in Germany the number of my visitors was not great; still it could be said that I had more visitors than all the patients in that hospital. This was a matter of wonder and interest to the staff of the hospital, because it was extremely rare that a German came to visit any sick person even of his own family.

"It will be pertinent to mention an interesting incident which is a living example of

"love" and "fraternity" in civilized nations.

"A few years ago, a professor of a German University, embraced Islam at the hands of the President of Islamic Community at Hamburg. After sometime, he became sick and was admitted in a hospital for treatment.

"The President of Islamic Commuity came to know of his illness and went to see him at the hospital. He found the professor in a sad and pathetic mood, and asked him to explain the cause of so much sorrow.

"The professor, who had not said a single word yet and seemed lost in his forebodings, now narrated this incredible story:

"'Today my wife and son came to see me. They were informed by the officials of the hos-

pital that I was suferring from cancer. While departing they told me that since cancer had brought me at the verge of death and I could not survive more than a few days, they bid me good-bye and wished to be excused from visiting me again.' Then the patient continued. 'My spiritual torture and apparent sorrow is not because the door of hope is shut before me and I am expecting to die soon; but it is because of the unjust and inhumane attitude of my wife and son which is more torturing than the warrant of death.'

"The President of Islamic Community was greatly touched by his pitiable condition and told him: 'Islam has emphasized on visiting the patients; and I will keep on visiting you whenever I get some free time, and will perform my religious duties.' These words consoled the tortured professor to a great extent.

"His condition was fast deteriorating and he died after a few days. The President of Islamic Community made arrangement for his burial according to Islam and some Muslims went to the hospital and brought the dead body to the graveyard.

"While burial was in progress, a young man in a furious mood came rushing and enquired about the dead body of the professor.

"'But what relation do you have with the deceased?' People asked him. `Well, he was my father and I have come to hand over his dead body to the hospital, because just before his death, I had sold his body to the hospital for thirty Marks.'

"Though he tried to create much trouble, as the Muslims did not yield, he had to surrender.

When asked of his occupation, the young man said that he worked in a factory in the mornings and decorated dogs in the afternoons."

This bitter incident shows how much the so-called civilized world has become devoid of human affection and love.

Today, retrogression of humanity from the view point of moral values and the over-whelming evils of society cannot be glossed over. Great thinkers, while admitting this bitter fact, are looking to find a remedy; and are very much worried because of this undesireable condition. They realize the malady and appreciate that a new world can only be created if the present day lawlessness and permissiveness are removed and the foundation of the new society is laid upon faith and virtues.

The people surrounded by this type of society admit that their life is an empty one; and that this kind of living cannot bring humanity to any good. It will be better for you to hear this confession from General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as U.S.A. President, when he was taking the oath of his office:

"Our affluent society rests on shaky moral grounds. We reach the moon and pollute the earth. We long for peace and go to war. An age that has split the atom must heal the splits in humanity. Empty hands must be filled with work, empty stomachs with food, and empty hearts with satisfaction. To cure the moral crisis that blights our world, each of us need only look to ourselves. If we each listen to the still small voice of conscience we shall soon perceive that simple basic things, like goodness, purity, unselfishness, love, integrity, are our greatest

and most priceless treasure."

When one looks at these facts, one is bound to stand respectfully before the Law-giver of Islam.

The Law-giver, giving full consideration to all materials, spiritual and natural requirements of human beings, has brought the excellent laws which are in complete harmony with basic human nature and fulfil all its needs.

These laws have been acted upon for centuries and have produced happy results.

The laws were not just some letters in books; but were enforced both in letter and spirit, and their enforcement did not create any problem.

In the end, it should be remembered that all Muslims are duty-bound to propagate the teachings of Islam in their prestine purity. Especially, they must acquaint their youths with this divine teachings, so that the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation (which is a living factor of Muslim society) becomes stronger and stronger; and under the protection of that brotherhood and cooperation we march forward to prosperity and happiness.

THE END